An exhibit

Rare to Bim

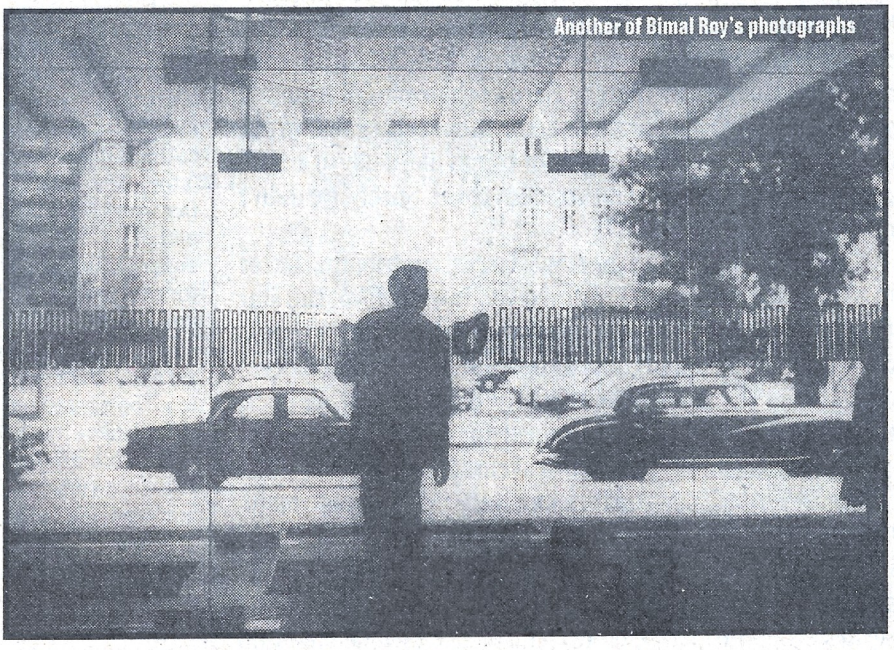
Film enthusiasts and critics have all along sung praises for the film classics made by the late Bimal Roy, but very few know about his avid interest in photography — still photography, aside from his masterly composed camera-work, seen through his Black and White movies like Do Bigha Zamin, Devdas, Madhumati, Sujata and Bandini to mention just a few...

FOR the first time ever in Calcutta, Oxford Bookstore & Gallery, Calcutta, displayed (in collaboration with PRG and Jet Airways) a collection of Bimal Roy's photographs, taken casually, yet seriously, in India and abroad. Over almost three decades of his life, before, between and beyond his filmmaking career; since the late 30s when he was assistant cameraman to the late PC Barua, followed by his first independent film *Udayer Pathey*, produced by New Theatres, Calcutta, till his last film *Bandini* made in Mumbai in 1963.

Popular Bengali actor, Victor Banerjee, while inaugurating the exhibition, emphasized that the veteran cameraman-cum-film director, was one of the few stalwarts who had not been given his due, award-wise, despite being a recognized master and a distinct pace-setter. Perhaps he was always considered a Bombaywallah, although he was a sentitive Bengali to the core and even in Bengal, he was not acknowledged in the manner some others like Tapan Sinha or Ritwik Ghatak have been.

Samik Bandhopadhaya, a film critic, who also spoke at the inaugural ceremony remarked that

tribute
al Roy


Another of Bimal Roy's photographs

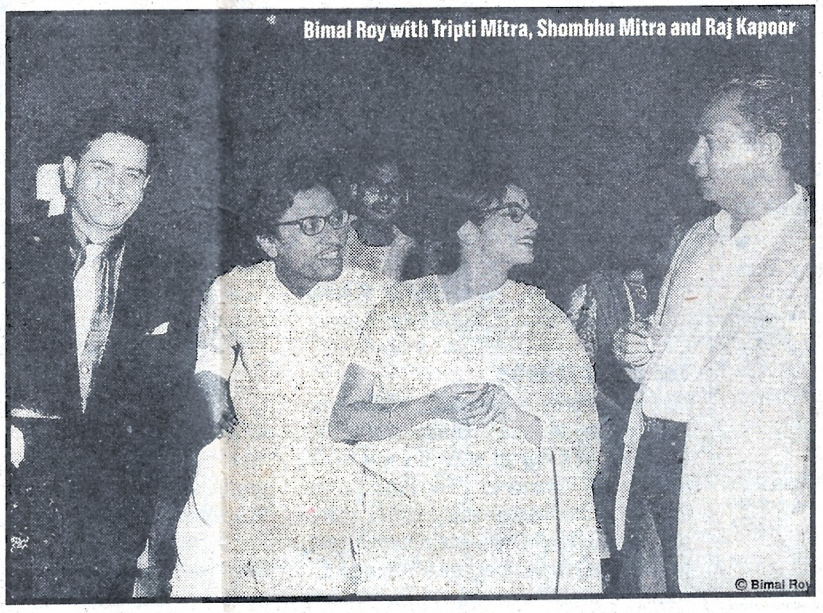
Bimal Roy's photographs were distinctly different from his film stills, heing impersonal and detached, which was quite remarked.

A number of Bimal Roy's relatives were present on the occassion, including his daughter Aparajita and Joy Roy his son, the latter had brought along iwth him a 11-minute relefim, edited from his father's last unfinished film *Amrita Kumbher Sandaney* which despite being silent, was eventually given sound effects, drawn from *Madhumati, Devdas, Bandini* and *Parakh* along with a song from *Kabuliwallah*. This film was also shown as a tribute to his father, along with the photography exhibition, on his 89th birth anniversary. Bimal Roy passed away at an early age of 55, after a long illness, but he left a legacy of some of the best Black and White films ever made in India, besides working as a cameraman for the legendary P.C. Barua, in *Mukti* and *Davdas* and for Tapan Sinha in *Kabuliwallah*.

Satyajit Roy described him as "undoubtedly a pioneer, who with his first film, *Udayer Pathey* was able to sweep aside the cobwebs of the old tradition and introduce a realism and subtlety wholly suited to cinema". His *Do Bigha Zamin* (1953) with Balraj Sahni in the cast was internatinally acclaimed and won rave reviews besides awards. Some of the finest stars were cast by him.

Dilip Kumar acted in *Devdas Yahudi* and *Madhumati*; So did Ashok Kumar, Meena Kumari, Suchitra Sen, Kamini Kaushal, Vijayantimala and Nutan in his other films. Story-script writers like Salil Chaudhury, Ritwik Ghatak, Nabyendu Ghosh and Gulzar worked with him. Music directors like Raichand Boral and Salil Chaudhury worked with him on his finest films. Hrishikesh Mukherjee edited his films and also learned the ropes to emerge as an independent filmmaker himself.

Curiosity corner


Bimal Roy with Tripti Mitra, Shombhu Mitra and Raj Kapoor

© Bimal Roy

Kamal Bose, cinemtographer of several of Bimal Roy's films, remarked in his tribute - "We had few directors in the industry with Bimal Da's perfect sense of visualisation".

Dilip Kumr said, "The closeness with which we worked revealed to me facets of Bimalda's transparent and tender personality. I think he is one of those men who brought not just maturity, but dignity to motion pictures in this country".

Said Shyam Benegal about Bimal Roy's photography. "He gave films a certain kind of texture or feel, taking great care to reveal where the light source was, to light up a set or place. This suddenly brings in a new element on celluloid - it suddenly connects one to reality. What he did use was the human module. He avoided the use of high contrast lighting - that kind of concept was seen for the first time". Victor Banerjee over emphsized that Bimal Roy should be given a Padma Vibhushan Award, even if it is posthumously.

PS: A retrospective of his films was also scheduled to be shown at Nandan, West Bengal Film Centre but were suddenly cancelled due to some court case pending over the rights of exhibitions.

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